

## **INSPIRED WORD**

**April 18, 2018**

### **PRAYER**

Lord, we know You are present with us because when two or three are gathered in Your name, You promised to be in our midst. Well, Lord, we've gathered, and we know You'll show because You're already here. Thank You, Lord, for Your promise; thank You for Your power; and thank You for the opportunity to praise You. Alleluia! Amen!

### **PRAYER / SHARING**

Lord, we truly come here to give You praise and glory tonight. And we thank You, Lord, for taking our burdens from us. And in doing that, I came across part of a reflection for today and I think it goes along with us giving our burdens to the Lord. It says, "No matter how dark the world might feel today, no matter how much rejection we may suffer, no matter how many struggles you may have, always remember that one day you will bask in Christ's glorious light that fills His temple forever. He has welcomed you with open arms and He has a perfect place waiting for you in His heavenly home." This is our God Who wants not only for us to give Him our burdens but He wants to take them from us. And we thank Him for that.

(Teaching on the Ps of Pentecost – Prayer)

(Prayer for a new Pentecost)

### **PRAYER**

Come, Holy Spirit, touch the hearts of Your people gathered here and minister to Your church through each and every vessel.

### **SHARING**

I was at Eucharistic Adoration on Sunday evening and I had worked all day like a lot of folks do, and I was tired and I was struggling; I was struggling to just stay focused on anything holy. So I said, "Okay, enough of this. I'd like to know You more, Jesus. How do I know You more? How do I become closer to You?" And after that a husband and wife, I believe, and several of their children came in, and as little children do, they made a little bit of noise and some racket and this and that. And I was thinking about that, and the thought came to my mind that maybe part of my issue is that I need to be more like those children, and trust, really trust God more, and stop worrying about how to do it and just try to give up some of the control. And then I got a very strong feeling that I was supposed to go ask the lady what she was praying about; I needed to ask her about her prayer. So I followed her out when she left and tapped her on the

shoulder and said, "Can you tell me what you were praying about? I just get the impression that I'm supposed to ask you." And she told me and thanked me for listening to the prompting that made me come and ask her that question. So I think sometimes I just make it more complicated than it's gotta be.

## SCRIPTURE

I'd like to start this time of praise with a scripture reading from **Matthew 8:5-13**. *When Jesus went to Capernaum, a centurion came up and pleaded with him. "Sir," he said, "My servant is lying at home, paralyzed and in great pain." Jesus said to him, "I will come myself and cure him." The centurion replied, "Sir, I am not worthy to have you under my roof. Just give the word and my servant will be healed. For I am under authority myself and I have soldiers under me and I say to one man "Go" and he goes, to another "Come here" and he comes, to my servant "Do this" and he does it." When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, "In truth I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found faith as great as this. And I tell you that many will come from east and west and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob at the feast in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom will be thrown to the darkness outside where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." And to the centurion, Jesus said, "Go back then. Let this be done for you as your faith demands." And the servant was cured at that moment.* And my sense of this story was that when we ask, we darn better well believe that Jesus can do what He says He's going to do. And that He wants to do what He says He can do, and in that faith, we will find consolation.

## SHARING

Okay, this is a follow up to what you were talking to us about, Barb. I've been reading the story about Peter and the keys to following Jesus. And I read this tonight and it fits exactly with what you said. In the Acts of the Apostles, we read how Peter led the church. He saw the need to elect someone for the vacancy left by Judas, and that was his very first decision after Christ's ascension. And the criteria that he used in electing an apostle is Peter telling the early Christian community that the most important qualification for an apostle was how much time that person spent with Jesus. And even today this is an earmark of a disciple of Christ. For the first Christians, this is time spent with Jesus in person. For us, this means time spent with Him in prayer, in worship and in adoration.

## SCRIPTURE / WORD OF WISDOM

When Ray started out talking to us tonight, I was called to this passage in Jeremiah 2 and it wasn't until I kind of heard everything here that I see how it fits in. But let me just read it to you first. **Jeremiah 2:2-3**: *Thus says the Lord, "I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. Israel was holy to the Lord, the first fruits of his harvest.* And Barb was talking about how we need to remember all that the Lord has done for us. Well, God remembers when we had that devotion and we had that zeal,

when we were in love with Him as a bride or a groom. But if Israel at that time was initially called the first fruits of God, you can look at Pentecost as being a second harvest and the first fruits that come from that. And we're part of all that then, the fruits of that harvest. And so just think of this again in terms of Pentecost that those times when we've been full of the Holy Spirit, Jesus remembers the devotion that we had then and asks for it now and always. He remembers our love for Him as a bride and how that love needs to stay strong and if you need to just recall the day that you married your spouse here on earth. We need to keep remembering that love that we had for Him and that He always has for us. "How you followed me" – that's definitely a part of it, and to continue to be the fruits of His harvest in the new Pentecost or in any Pentecost that we have.

### **SCRIPTURE / PRAYER**

**Psalm 46:1-5:** *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth be moved, though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with swelling. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved. God shall help her at the break of dawn.* Father, we just thank You and praise You and exalt Your holy name. For You alone are worthy. Worthy, worthy, worthy is the Lamb, worthy the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. We just thank You and praise You and exalt Your holy name, for You alone are worthy. And we imagine things, all kinds of things in our imaginations, Lord, but we do praise You and exalt You and magnify Your name. O Holy Risen Lamb of God, we praise You and exalt You and we just thank You for all the wondrous works You've done in our lives and the lives of our congregation as we congregate ourselves, we come together to worship You. We praise You and exalt Your holy name, for You alone are worthy. Worthy, worthy, worthy is the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world, for You alone are worthy. Alleluia to the Lamb, the holy risen Lamb of God, righteous and true, holy and just in all of Your ways.

### **EXHORTATION**

And because He's worthy, let's turn our hearts to our Love and our Light.

### **PRAYER**

Holy Spirit, come with Your fire, Lord. Ignite our hearts, O God, to evangelization, that we may take it everywhere. Salt of the world, light of the world, O Lord. Give us commitment, give us zeal for that. Come, Holy Spirit. Release Your Pentecostal gifts, O Lord. When we pray, make us salt, make us light, we're asking. We're asking for something very important. The Lord's listening and He sees our hearts and sees us asking that. Lord, we are asking You to make us salt and to make us light, salt and light sent into this world, O Lord, to proclaim Your glory, to proclaim Your holiness, to proclaim Your love, Lord Jesus. Send us, send us, we say yes. Glory to You, Lord. Fill our hearts with that love, Lord, that zeal.

## **SHARING**

This seems kind of stupid and I feel a little silly telling you this but I really do try to find God's message in a lot of different things. Last week we sang a song "a lamp unto my feet. You, God, are a lamp unto my feet." And for some reason that phrase just bugged me. Okay, why is the lamp just on my feet? And I'm sitting there thinking about this and I thought, okay, that actually makes sense because God being the light to my feet - that's where when we're on a path or a journey or walking, we need to see what's on the ground. If the light is just up there and it's little or whatever, we could stumble on something so for God to be the light to my feet, I was thinking that made sense. And then this song just said "we are a lamp on a stand." And I thought, okay, putting the two together: God has to be the light to our feet to show us the path. But by us being on the stand, it's not so directional, it's more illuminating and that's what we're supposed to be – illuminating others about God. Anyway, that's how I'm going to take it.

## **CONFIRMATION**

This confirms that. Right before we sang that song, God said to me, "I don't want to be in a compartment, in a drawer and be your God-thing that you take in and out. I don't want to be on the shelf and be admired there." I said, "Well, what then, Lord?" And we sang that song, and He said, "That's it. I want to be revealed in your life as salt and light."

## **CONFIRMATION**

In the Jewish days there were two kinds of lights. There was a light unto the feet which would only illuminate three or four steps ahead. And there was the general illumination that would illuminate everything. In the beatitudes, it talks about general illumination, not to hide our light under a bushel. It's not to hide it under a bushel but to put it on a lamp stand for it to shine for everyone. But there's a light unto our feet which gives us enough light to see three or four steps ahead so we'll know exactly... we'll be sure-footed and see the path in front of us which is affirming to what you said.

## **CONFIRMATION**

As we were doing that song, I just kept laughing because that's what you guys are talking about. Seeking first – everything else gets added on - the lamp on the lamp stand. But if you get them in reverse, and you try to be a lamp on a lamp stand before you've got the right path, it really goes sideways, really easy to fall off the cliff.

## **WORD OF WISDOM**

I keep thinking in my mind, and I think God's putting it there - don't limit God by putting Him in a box of your expectations, because He's much bigger, He's much stronger, He can conquer any fear; He can conquer anything that you even think that maybe might be possible. So don't limit Him with your expectations because He's much greater than that.

## **PRAYER / EXHORTATION**

Lord, we ask that You come into our hearts right now and tell us what is that first thing we're supposed to be looking for to offer back to You. The thing we most need, the thing we can most give. What is our first thing of heaven? Let's just ask Him in our hearts and take a moment and let Him answer.

## **SHARING / SENSE**

When Barb was talking, she mentioned Mary being in the upper room and one of the first things they did was remember, because that's what we do when our loved ones leave us - we remember the stories. The apostles had three years of stories; Mary had 33 years of stories. And my sister has two twin boys who you've heard too many stories about. And they turned 4 this weekend. And Elizabeth is an elementary school teacher by training and the gift that she gives to her boys is that each year she puts together a little paragraph-long memory, a summary, it's almost like their report card as their Mama, talking about who they are and who they've become that year and the things she loves most about their personality and the way they see the world. They may be fraternal twins but they are as different as night and day. And she notices all those details, of how one is energetic but how he's quiet too, and he'll focus so intently that he can do a puzzle for hours if he wants to but he's also running mach-2 with his hair on fire all the time. And she just went on and on about all these things about her sons and about how glad she is to be there Mama. And as Barb told that story of remembering, I could just see Mary because you know she was paying attention to all the little details of her Son's life that she shared with Him. And she shared those stories with the apostles. "Let me tell you even more about Him. You love Him for this. Let me tell you about this." And as we spend time in prayer and spend time in scripture, the more we read and sit and listen, the more we get to know our brother Jesus in that way. And we know His Father because He says, "If you see me, you see the Father. I'm a chip off the ole block. You see me, you get us together, you can tell. There's a real strong family resemblance here. And I'm going to give you that Holy Spirit, which is that combination, that love that my Father and I have, with so much power because it's so much love, bubbling out of you into other people. Hang out with me. Get to know us. Hang out with my family. You're adopted already. Live that. Live your adoption. Be a part of the family."

(Message in tongues)

## **INTERPRETATION**

And now, my beloved, I say this to you. Be still and listen for I desire to speak to you of the trip which we must take. On the day that the Jordan was crossed, my ark went before. And I say to you, my beloved, on this day I go before. There were some who did not cross the Jordan for they had doubted and were weak of faith. There are some of you, my beloved, who may not

trip with me. But I say to you, the others, it is time to go forth. As I said to you before, it is time for us to walk; for indeed, I shall place a light at your feet and you shall know that it is I who leads. And together we shall shine forth that others may see and they may also walk with us. Be not afraid for I go before you. Did you hear? Be not afraid. But I also say to you, stand up and walk. The time to be comfortable has passed. The time to step forth and shine bright the goodness that I have given you is now. The darkness must not prevail. My light must shine through you upon this world. So listen to me once again, my beloved, be not afraid of the new path. Be not afraid of what lies beyond, but rather follow the path that I shall lay before you. Indeed, prepare yourselves for the time to cross the Jordan has come.

## **SCRIPTURE**

From **Isaiah 40:3-5, 8-11**: *A voice cries out: "In the desert prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill shall be made low; the rugged land shall be made a plain, the rough country a broad valley. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all mankind shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." Go up on a high mountain, Zion, herald of glad tidings; cry out at the top of your voice, Jerusalem, herald of good news, fear not to cry out and say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" Here comes with power the Lord God, who rules by his strong arm. Like a shepherd, he feeds his flock; he gathers the lambs carrying them in his bosom, and leading the ewes with care.*

## **SCRIPTURE / EXHORTATION**

**Isaiah 12:4-6**: *Give thanks to the Lord, acclaim his name among the nations; make known his deeds. Proclaim how exalted is his name. Sing praise to the Lord for his glorious achievement; let this be known throughout the earth. Shout with exaltation, O city of Zion, shout with exaltation.* What did we hear tonight? Don't put Me in a box. Don't put Me on a shelf. Don't limit Me. Do not be afraid. Stand up and walk. I will go before you. I will be your light. Yes, it's time to cross the Jordan. But we need to take a first step. And the first step is already what the Lord has given us. Do not be afraid. The second step is stand up. The third step is to walk, because His word tells us "Shout with exaltation, O city of Zion." Do not limit Me. Don't put Me in a box. Don't put Me on a shelf. But take Me out and let other people hear of the love that I have for them. Stand up and walk. That's our mission; that's our call; that's what the Lord told us to do. And He said, "Do not be afraid." Amen.

## **EXHORTATION**

If that song is still in your heart and the Lord's presence is strong with you, take it out to the community. Take it out to the bigger world. They need that. God's given you that part that bubbles over and doesn't want to stop, so that you have the strength and the joy to share with somebody who most needs it.

## WORD OF WISDOM

What you said, Doris, about expectations and not to let Him be put in a box as Laura mentioned - I just have to say that in waiting, what the apostles expected... they were expectant for the promise of the Father. But little did they know what that would mean to them. Did Peter, a fisherman, expect to go out and preach to thousands of people? Did he expect to know the whole... to be able to tell the people about the word of God and people converted on the spot? Did John and Peter expect to go to the temple and say, "Well, we don't have any money but in the name of Jesus, rise up and walk?" Did they expect that? They expected the promise of the Father but if they had said, "Well, okay, this is what we think will happen. I remember that Jesus sent us out and we went out with the Holy Spirit and we did all these things but then when we came back, we couldn't do it anymore." If that's all they would have expected, would we be here today? No, because they were men of courage and faith, filled with the Holy Spirit. They lived beyond their expectations and I just have to say that's what we are. We are to be lighthouses living beyond the expectations that we have, that He will bless us with that Holy Spirit, that we can go out every single day of our lives, and that this is what we say in the morning when we get up: "God, I can't wait to see what You and I are going to do today."

## SHARING / WORD OF WISDOM / SCRIPTURE

I know we have to get going but I was in a community like this in 1968 and we had the same situation. And we have to be available to what the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit want us to do. We have to make ourselves available and we have the choice. Are we going to make ourselves available or are we going to say, "I'm sorry, God, I'm tired and I'm going to do this and I'm going to do that." And it's like, we're going to walk with God or we're not. I was 16 years old when I was baptized in the Holy Spirit and the whole saints of God were there and we were touched by the Holy Spirit. In **Acts 2:2-3**, it says, "*When the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all together gathered in the one place and the Spirit of the Lord came upon them and there were tongues of fire that fell upon them.* And that's the kind of thing that we can expect to happen when we make ourselves available to God. God wants to do that and if we make ourselves available, He will do that and the only thing we have to do is make ourselves available and let Him do that. He wants to do it. **Psalm 16:12** is the other verse God gave me tonight. "*In the presence of the Lord is fullness of joy and in his right hand are pleasures evermore.*" And I am so excited! Amen!